

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2002

July 11, 2003

The Honorable Mel Martinez  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
451 Seventh Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Mr. Secretary:

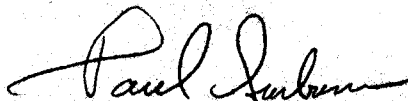
Recent data provided to us by HUD, and analyzed by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities in their report released today, indicate that the Administration's budget for FY2004 significantly underfunds the housing voucher program. We urge you to seek at least \$1.25 billion in additional funding for FY2004 to ensure that all families receiving Housing Choice Vouchers can remain in their homes.

The FY2003 and FY2004 budgets for HUD significantly underestimate both voucher costs and the number of vouchers in use, as indicated by the recent data HUD provided to us. Congress relies on these estimates in determining the level of appropriations needed in housing programs each year. Because of the inaccurate estimates, we are now faced with a dire situation in the upcoming fiscal year—an estimated shortfall of over \$1.25 billion in funding for vouchers that will be in use in the marketplace helping families to pay their rents. This means, if additional funding is not provided, over 180,000 families will be at risk of losing their homes.

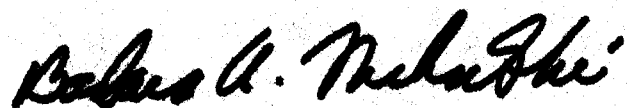
On January 27, 2003, you reiterated your commitment to ending homelessness and said that you were working to "not only help end chronic homelessness on the streets of America, but to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place." Unfortunately, the budget request submitted to Congress works against this goal by putting tens of thousands of children and their parents at risk of losing their housing and becoming homeless.

Again, we request that you seek the additional funding necessary to ensure that over 180,000 low-income working, elderly and disabled families do not lose their housing. We trust that you understand the urgency of this situation, and look forward to receiving your request for additional funds.

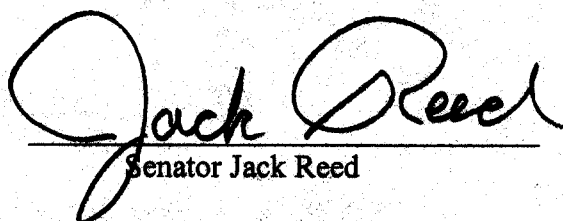
Sincerely,



Senator Paul S. Sarbanes



Senator Barbara A. Mikulski



Senator Jack Reed